

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

What is claimed is :

1. (AS AMENDED) A method for processing information, comprising the steps of:

a) maintaining a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto;

[a]b) receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners, the information from each bar code scanner including at data from at least one bar code;

[b]c) determining source and destination information for the received information, the destination information being determined from the received information and database entries relating thereto; and

[c]d) distributing data from the received information to at least one destination identified by the destination information.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving data from the at least one destination for communicating to a user of a bar code scanner identified by the source information.

3. (original) The method according to claim 2, wherein information is received in batch form from the identified bar code scanner and further comprising communicating responsive information to the identified bar code scanner.

4. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information is received in an encrypted form and is decrypted before the step of distributing.

5. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the source information comprises device identification information.

6. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the destination information comprises information from a scanned bar code.

7. CANCELED

8. (AS AMENDED) The method according to claim 1 [7], further comprising assigning unique bar codes comprising destination information which is stored in the database.

9. (original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the unique bar codes are assigned for a given time period and are reassignable thereafter.

10. (original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising distributing a bar code image file for the unique bar code when the bar code is assigned.

11. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating security information with each bar code scanner and requiring the security information from a user before use of the scanner or before accepting bar code information from the scanner.

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13. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving time information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

14. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving location information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

15. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the source information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

16. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the destination information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

17. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein device identification information is received and the source information is encoded in the device identification information.

18. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information is received by wireless communication.

19. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the data is distributed to the destination over the Internet.

20. (AS AMENDED) A portal for processing information, comprising:

a)[.] a first interface for receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners,
the information from each bar code scanner including at data from at least one bar code;

b)[.]. a processor for determining source and destination information for the received information;

c) a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto maintained by the processor, wherein the processor determines the destination information from the received information and database entries relating thereto; and

d) [c.] a second interface for distributing data associated with the received information to at least one destination identified by the destination information.

21. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the second interface receives data from the at least one destination for communicating to a bar code scanner identified by the source information.

22. (original) The portal according to claim 21, wherein information is received in batch form from the identified bar code scanner and wherein the first interface communicates responsive information to the user of the identified bar code scanner.

23. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor receives the information in an encrypted form and decrypts the information before distributing same.

24. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the source information comprises device identification information.

25. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the destination information comprises information from a scanned bar code.

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27. (AS AMENDED) The portal according to claim 20 [26], further comprising the processor assigning unique bar codes comprising destination information which is stored in the database.

28. (original) The portal according to claim 27, wherein the unique bar codes are assigned for a given time period and are reassignable thereafter.

29. (original) The portal according to claim 27, further comprising the processor distributing a bar code image file for the unique bar code when the bar code is assigned.

30. (original) The portal according to claim 20, further comprising the processor associating security information with each bar code scanner and requiring the security information from a user before use of the scanner.

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32. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives time information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

33. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives location information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

34. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the source information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

35. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the destination information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

36. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives device identification information and the source information is encoded in the device identification information.

37. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives information by wireless communication.

38. (original) The portal according to claim 20, wherein the second interface distributes data to the destination over the Internet.

39. CANCELED

40 – 96. CANCELED

97 – 98. Previously Cancelled

99 – 115. CANCELED

116. (original) A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity, comprising the steps of:

providing said bar code with a prefix portion indicating whether the bar code is encrypted or not;

connecting a user to a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader in dependence on whether the bar code is encrypted; and

transmitting information from the portal to the user based when connected to the portal.

117. CANCELED

118 – 130. Previously cancelled

131. (original) A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

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providing said bar code to a group of users;

connecting each user to the Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader ; and

permitting the group to collaborate at a web page.

132. CANCELED